

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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72

ACTION SS-25

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P 162038Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0794

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 2643

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS FROM AMBASSADOR HILL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, AR, MORG

SUBJECT: GENERAL OFFICER BILLET ARGENTINA

1. AS A RESULT OF THE FY-75 SECURITY ASSISTANCE APPROPRIATIONS ACT AND THE ATTENDANT LIMITING OF GENERAL/FLAG OFFICERS ASSIGNED TO THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE ORGANIZATIONS, THERE EXISTS THE POSSIBILITY OF DOWNGRADING THE GENERAL OFFICER BILLET IN THE MILITARY GROUP TO AN 06. I HAVE BECOME VERY CONCERNED OVER THIS POSSIBILITY AND WOULD LIKE TO CONVEY TO YOU MY POSITION ON THIS MATTER.

2. THE MILITARY GROUP SOME TIME AGO HAD 60 PERSONNEL, SUBSEQUENTLY DRAWN DOWN TO 29, AND IN THE SUMMER OF 1974 THEY WERE REDUCED TO 20 FOR SECURITY REASONS. THEY ARE NOW IN THE PROCESS OF TEMPORARILY DRAWING DOWN TO 13 PERSONNEL, AGAIN FOR SECURITY REASONS. THE ABOVE DRAWDOWN TO 13 HAS NOT YET BEEN BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE - PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF THE SECRETARY'S PROPOSED VISIT HERE NEXT WEEK.

3. IN MY EXPERIENCE AS A GOVERNMENT SERVANT IN MANY FOREIGN COUNTRIES, I HAVE NEVER KNOWN A PEOPLE WITH A GREATER SENSE OF PRIDE THAN THE ARGENTINE. THIS COUNTRY HAS ALWAYS VIEWED WITH CONCERN THE APPARENT IMBALANCE IN US INTEREST BETWEEN THEIR COUNTRY AND BRAZIL, WHERE THREE FLAG/GENERAL OFFICERS CURRENTLY

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HEAD THE MILITARY MISSIONS AS COMPARED TO ONE GENERAL OFFICER

HERE. TO REMOVE THE GENERAL OFFICER BILLET AT THIS TIME, WHILE WE ARE TRYING TO EMPHASIZE THAT OUR REDUCTION IN TOTAL MISSION STRENGTH IS A TEMPORARY SECURITY MEASURE, WOULD CLEARLY INDICATE T THE ARGENTINES A SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN OUR POLICY OF COOPERATION AND SUPPORT IN THESE DIFFICULT TIMES FOR THEM.

4. I HAVE ALREADY EXPRESSED MY DEEP CONCERN IN PRIVATE COMMUNICATIONS TO CINCSOUTH, OSD/ISA AND DEPUTY SECDEF. HOWEVER, I THINK THAT YOU IN CONSULTATION WITH POL/MIL WILL HAVE A BETTER APPRECIATION OF THE POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES THAT A STEP SUCH AS THAT BEING PROPOSED COULD HAVE IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS, AND ESPECIALLY AT A TIME THAT COINCIDES WITH THE SECRETARY'S VISIT.

5. MY RECOMMENDATION IS THAT IF THE DOWNGRADING IS INEVITABLE IN THE LONG RUN, IT SHOULD OCCUR UPON THE NORMAL CHANGE IN MILGROUP COMMANDER, NOW SCHEDULED FOR AUGUST 1976. AN EARLIER DEPARTURE OF THE INCUMBENT WOULD BE SEEN AS A LESSENING OF INTEREST IN ARGENTINA. I HOPE I CAN DEPEND ON YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

WARM REGARD,  
HILL

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Draft Date:** 16 APR 1975  
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